

Committee on Resources

Subcommittee on National Parks & Public Lands

Witness Statement

**TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR. OF OHIO
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS
HEARING ON H.R. 4125,
TO PROVIDE AN URBAN PARK AND RECREATION RECOVERY PROGRAM
GRANT TO ASSIST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MILLENNIUM CULTURAL
COOPERATIVE PARK IN YOUNGSTOWN OHIO
MAY 16, 2000**

I want to thank Chairman Hansen and Ranking Member Romero-Barcelo for agreeing to hold this hearing on my bill, H.R. 4125, to provide a grant under the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program to assist in the development of a Millennium Cultural Cooperative Park in Youngstown, Ohio.

I will not provide the committee with a lengthy statement. Robert Vargo, managing director of the Youngstown Playhouse, will testify later, and will provide the subcommittee with a number of details about this exciting initiative.

H.R. 4125 directs the U.S. Department of the Interior to provide the Youngstown Playhouse with \$2 million a year over the next five years to develop the park. The grant would be awarded through the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program.

The Youngstown Playhouse is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that offers a wide range of performing arts programs for children, teenagers and adults. The Playhouse is working with local officials to develop a Millennium Cultural Cooperative Park that would be located at several different locations in downtown Youngstown.

Possible sites include the State Theater Building, the Welles Building, the Armed Forces Building and the First Title Building.

The intent of the project is to renovate and expand the Playhouse's existing facility at 600 Playhouse Lane, and the other properties over the next three years. The renovated and expanded properties would be home to the new Millennium Cultural Cooperative Park. The Cooperative will consist of a Park Center for the Arts, an Arts Park and Education Complex, a Cultural Center for the Arts, the Playhouse, a Experimental Showcase, and a Performance Park.

In addition to authorizing \$10 million over five years for the initiative, my bill also directs the National Park Service, a division of the Department of the Interior, to provide technical assistance to the Playhouse in developing this unique urban park.

I understand that in recent years the urban park recovery grant program has not received adequate funding. I hope that situation changes. It is an excellent program. The development of a the Millennium Cultural Cooperative Park in Youngstown is precisely the type of initiative the program was designed to assist.

Once again, I want to thank the subcommittee for holding this hearing. I urge the subcommittee to approve this legislation and report it favorably to the full committee.

At this point, I would be happy to answer any questions the subcommittee Members might have.

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